

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 14692 01 OF 02 231644Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 231621Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4997

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 14692

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK

SUBJECT: LABOR PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN LOOKS AT CONFERENCE

REF: LONDON 14019

SUMMARY - TOM BRADLEY, LABOR MP AND VICE CHAIRMAN, LABOR
OARTY, DISCUSSED OUTLOOK FOR UPCOMING PARTY CONFERENCE
(REFTTEL) AND OPINED THAT: CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS WILL
ATTACK RECORD AND PROGRAM OF WILSON GOVERNMENT; NATIONAL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) WILL MOVE FURTHER LEFTWARD; AND
WILSON, AS A RESULT, WILL INCREASINGLY IGNORE NEC AND
PARTY APPARATUS. THE NET RESULT, BRADLEY SAID, WILL BE
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PAGE 02 LONDON 14692 01 OF 02 231644Z

TO INCREASE STRESS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PARTY IN COMING

MONTHS, MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR GOVERNMENT TO TAKE MEASURES NECESSARY TO BOLSTER ECONOMY. END SUMMARY.

1. TOM BRADLEY, WHO IN ADDITION TO BEING MP IS PRESIDENT OF RAILROAD SALARIED STAFF UNION (TSSA) AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF LABOR PARTY. TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE IS VERY BEARISH ON PROSPECTS FOR SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 3 LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE (REFTEL). CONFERENCE, HE FEARS, WILL BE DOMINATED BY LEFTISTS WHO WILL PRESS ATTACK ON WILSON GOVERNMENT RECORD AND WHAT IT PERCEIVES TO BE BACKSLIDING ON ELECTION MANIFESTO COMMITMENTS. IN THIS REGARD BRADLEY SAID ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY ANTHONY CROSLAND WAS ABSOLUTELY CORRECT WHEN, IN RECENT SPEECH, HE STATED CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION IMPLIES DECLINE IN BRITISH STANDARD OF LIVING FOR AT LEAST TWO MORE YEARS AND FACED WITH THIS SITUATION GOVERNMENT SHOULD SELECT ONE OR TWO PRIORITY SECTORS (E.G. HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION) WHERE IT SHOULD CONCENTRATE ITS LIMITED RESOURCES TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM IMPACT. PARTY LEFT-WING, HOWEVER, WILL NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE ECONOMIC REALITIES OF SITUATION, AND WILL SEEK TO PUNISH THE GOVERNMENT FOR NOT MOVING FASTER ON A BROAD RANGE OF SOCIOECONOMIC PROGRAMS.

2. AS REGARDS NEC ELECTIONS, BRADLEY WAS REASONABLY CONFIDENT HE WILL BE RE-ELECTED AS A TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVE. FACT THAT HE WILL SUCCEED TO PARTY CHAIRMANSHIP, IF RE-ELECTED, ALSO APPEARS TO ENHANCE HIS PROSPECTS. CHANCELLOR DENIS HEALEY, HE THOUGHT, MAY WELL BE OUSTED AS ONE OF SEVEN CONSTITUENCY PARTY REPRESENTATIVES. HEALEY FINISHED SEVENTH IN LAST YEAR'S RACE, AND HIS ANTI INFLATION POLICIES HAVE ALIENATED MANY CONSTITUENCY ORGANIZATIONS (THE UNIONS DO NOT VOTE IN THIS ELECTION), WHILE LEFT-WING DISSIDENT ERIC HEFFER IS MAKING A VERY STRONG BID FOR ELECTION. PARTY TREASURER JIM CALLAGHAN AND PRICES SECRETARY SHIRLEY WILLIAMS(ONE OF FIVE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVES), HE BELIEVES, WILL BE RE-ELECTED, BUT BY NARROW MARGIN. LEFT-WING REPRESENTATION ON NEC IS CERTAIN TO BE INCREASED BY ONE (COOPERATIVE SEAT NOW HELD BY MP JOHN CARTWRIGHT) AND COULD BE INCREASED BY AS MANY AS FIVE, IF ALL VULNERABLE MODERATES LOSE THEIR SEATS.
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PAGE 03 LONDON 14692 01 OF 02 231644Z

3. CONTINUED LEFTWARD SHIFT OF NEC, BRADLEY BELIEVES, WILL HAVE LITTLE SHORT TERM EFFECT ON GOVERNMENT POLICY. WILSON, HE SAID, IS ALREADY OPENLY CONTEMPTUOUS OF NEC, AND ILLUSTRATED THIS ASSERTION WITH DESCRIPTION OF RECENT CABINET/NEC MEETING. WILSON, ACCORDINGLY, WILL NOT HESITATE TO IGNORE PARTY TOTALLY IF IT FALLS UNDER INCREASED LEFTIST DOMINATION. HE THOUGHT WILSON WOULD BE ACTING

CORRECTLY IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES (BRADLEY IS A JENKINSITE AND HAS NO PARTICULAR LOVE FOR WILSON), BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD ULTIMATELY WEAKEN PARTY AS A POLITICAL FORCE. THIS, HE SUGGESTED, MIGHT HASTEN A NATIONAL POLITICAL REALIGNMENT WHICH HE PERSONALLY WOULD FAVOR. HE COULD FORESEE NO CHALLENGE TO WILSON'S LEADERSHIP AT PRESENT, HOWEVER. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY WOULD WISH TO SEE CALLAGHAN, HEALEY, BENN OR FOOT AS LEADER TO REPLACE WILSON, AND THAT THE ABSENCE OF A STRONG CHALLENGER LEAVES WILSON IN A MUCH

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PAGE 01 LONDON 14692 02 OF 02 231640Z

43

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 14692

STRONGER POSITION THAN WOULD OTHERWISE BE THE CASE.
BRADLEY DISMISSED THE POSSIBILITY THAT DARK HORSE ERIC
VARLEY MIGHT BE ELECTED TO REPLACE WILSON, AT LEAST FOR

NOW, AND ADDED THAT HE WOULD BE A POOR CHOICE IN ANY CASE

4. STRESS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PARTY, ACCORDING TO BRADLEY, WILL GROW. HE EXPECTS GOVERNMENT TO ANNOUNCE SUBSTANTIAL CUTS IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING ONCE THE CONFERENCE SEASON IS OVER, AND THAT THESE CUTS WILL PROVOKE STRONG, BUT INEFFECTUAL REACTION WITHIN THE PARTY. REAL THREAT, HE SAID, WOULD COME FROM TORIES WHO UP TO NOW HAVE PROVIDED INEFFECTUAL PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION. HE IS CONCERNED WITH REPORTS OF CONSERVATIVE LEADER THATCHER'S SUCCESS IN THE U.S., BELIEVING THAT SHE MAY NOW RETURN TO PARLIAMENT WITH MUCH INCREASED CONFIDENCE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LONDON 14692 02 OF 02 231640Z

WHICH WOULD PLACE ADDED CONSTRAINTS ON GOVERNMENT.

5. COMMENT: BRADLEY IS A LEADING PARLIAMENTARY RIGHT-WINGER, A STRONG SUPPORTER OF HOME SECRETARY ROY JENKINS AND UNCOMFORTABLE WITH HIS PARTY'S LEFT-WING. HIS VIEWS SHOULD BE JUDGED ACCORDINGLY. NEVERTHELESS, HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE PROBABLE RESULTS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE IS SIMILAR TO OUR OWN (REFTEL). WE ALSO UNDERSTAND HIS PROSPECTS FOR RE-ELECTION TO NEC WERE GIVEN INDIRECT BOOST BY TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION (TGWU), WHICH FOR FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS WILL HAVE ONLY ONE CANDIDATE (ALEC KITSON) FOR NEC. END COMMENT.

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